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What is *Prunus insititia*?

BY P. A. RYDBERG

In the February number of the *Botanical Gazette* Prof. Waugh says: "I am somewhat at a loss to understand the criticism which Dr. Rydberg offers in the December *Gazette* upon my conclusions regarding *Prunus insititia* Linn. as set forth in the *Gazette* of last June. He says: 'If Professor Waugh had said that *P. insititia* is the same as *P. domestica damascena* * * * I would have been the last to criticise.' This is precisely what I did say; and it is a conclusion upon which I still insist."

Prof. Waugh intentionally or unintentionally has omitted to cite the reasons that I gave for my statement. I added in my article in the December *Gazette*: "I have not the means to disprove the former." With the facilities that are afforded me by the combined libraries of Columbia University and the New York Botanical Garden and one of the largest herbaria found in America, I find myself unable to undertake the task, for it would require fieldwork done in Europe and access to all the literature on the subject. Prof. Waugh dared with much less facilities than I have to decide, as he says himself, 'that there is no such species as *P. insititia*,' notwithstanding the fact that nearly all European botanists hold a different opinion. The existence or non-existence of *P. insititia* as a species, and whether *P. insititia* and *P. domestica damascena* are the same or not, are questions that should be left to European botanists, who are much more able to settle these questions. I think that it is pretentious for an American to undertake such a work. American botanists have puzzles enough of their own to solve, so that they had better allow the Europeans to take care of their own flora. This is in plain words my criticism.

By leaving out initials, I have had the misfortune to be misinterpreted. When I said: "Koch, the acknowledged authority in Germany, recognized it," I meant, of course, William Daniel Joseph Koch, the great botanist, and not Karl Koch, the dendrologist. While the latter, perhaps, is better known in America on account of our lack of good general dendrologies, he has never

had the reputation of the older Koch and never can claim in the same sense the title, "the acknowledged authority." Professor Waugh's remark on Karl Koch having changed his opinion has therefore no bearing on my statement.

When I spoke of the non-existence of *P. insititia* in America I meant, of course, in the wild state. The existence of a plant in an orchard, garden, greenhouse or in a pot on the window-sill, is to me, as a pure and simple field botanist, the same as non-existence.